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JAMES AND SHAKESPEARE:
UNIFICATION THROUGH MAPPING

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all who wander.

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UNIFICATION THROUGH MAPPING

CHRISTINA WAGNER

ABSTRACT

The art of exploration became an important aspect of theater in early modern England. Exploration is typically done through the utilization of a map. The map scene in *Lear* provides a focal point to peer into the political ventures of King James I. As a proponent for peace, James both unified and divided his kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland through the use of cartography as a way to show the aspirations of a king. *Lear*, in dividing his kingdom between his three daughters, shows Shakespeare's careful strategic planning of the division of a kingdom and what that means in early modern England.

While the map scene in *Lear* forces us to look more closely at the land that is represented on the map, the scene also forces us to look at *how* the land is represented on the map. Prior criticism has focused on the division of *Lear*'s lands, but this paper forces us to look at how *Lear* divides and also how he unifies. This strategy of unification and division mirrors the political strategy of James through his own division and unification tactics. This thesis will focus both on how Shakespeare represents the map in the confines of a play and how the political struggles of a king are represented in that play.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Act 1, Scene 1, in *King Lear*, Lear references a map: “The map there” (1.1.35), and scholars since have long wondered what that map may have contained. Using the history of cartography to illustrate the complexity of what this map may signify, this thesis proposes that the map works at several levels: it reveals the issues of patronage in that the cartographer had to balance his depiction against his employer's wishes; it models the political realities that Lear faced in the unification of his kingdom; it highlights the shifting boundaries of a king's owned lands; and finally, it functions as a symbol of the play itself in that the play becomes the map to the political realities faced by England in James's reign. As Lear splits his kingdom, so England, in splitting through unification faced a new political era. Theater became an outlet for readers to grasp in its entirety the massive changes through which they were living.

The map initially represents all tangible lands in the eye of the cartographer. Yet, maps are not simply drawings on paper. Maps are two-dimensional representations of not only the physical land, but are also “theorised to be realistic images; map makers are assumed to make the best (that is, the most realistic) maps possible; geographical information can only be improved with repeated measurements over time” (Edney 188).¹ Cartographers are further reliant on their employment with “petty-minded bureaucrats, bankruptcy and political squabbles” (Edney 188). The cartographer, typically employed by another, must decide on specific details in mapmaking that can be advantageous to himself, but also politically advantageous to his employer.

Many people in the monarchy employed cartographers to draw and render the lands belonging to the monarchy.² During the reign of King James I, the king employed several cartographers, including, most importantly, John Speed (who was a prominent cartographer during the Stuart reign).³ Alongside Speed were several other important figures who shaped how Britain appeared on paper, both as a cartographic representation and in correspondence between high-ranking Stuart officials and those in control of the paper representation of Britain. Among these high-ranking officials was James I, who displayed a keen interest in the art of exploration. James's interest “helps us to resituate our attention to the ways that English colonial practices in Ireland helped to shape colonial interventions elsewhere” (Netzlöff 313). The map in *Lear* signifies the massive amount of

¹ See Matthew H. Edney, “Theory and the History of Cartography.”

² See Mark Netzlöff “Forgetting the Ulster Plantation: John Speed's *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (1611) and the Colonial Archive.”

³ See Netzlöff, pp. 313-316.

exploration that went on at this period.⁴ Exploration became a great passion for James, and he routinely studied not only the art of exploration, but also used this passion in his colonial practices. In a letter from Sir Thomas Wilson, James's Keeper of Records, Wilson reminds the king of a previous visit when the king had remarked at the “size and scope” of the archival records, and when James exclaimed “we had more to do with Ireland than with all the world beside” (Netzloff 313). With concern to mapping, Speed's *Theatre* contains the mapping of both Ireland and England (the first cartographic representations of Great Britain for James), which visualizes “James I's multinational empire of Great Britain” with a banner at the top of the map “designating the title of James's consolidated kingdom of 'Great Britain and Ireland” (Netzloff 316-7).⁵ By James declaring his imperial title of King of Great Britaine and Ireland, he is using “the ancient name which [he] had revived to describe the geographical entity resulting from the formal union of England, Scotland and Wales” (Gillies 48). By using the historical reference of Britaine, James is hoping for a concerted national identity and a collective emphatic feeling of Britain-ness.⁶

To achieve a national identity for Britain, James's cartographer, Speed, applies his mapmaking skills to show, on paper, the political aspirations of James. On a map, these political aspirations show a conjoined kingdom of countries under the name and control of King James; however, Speed's maps do not depict the effects of political warfare that James endured to achieve status such as this. By cleaning up

⁴ Exploration in this period included Ireland and the Americas.

⁵ This is representative of James's ascension to both England and other colonial territories.

⁶ See Netzloff, pp. 317. Speed suggests that James's title “construct[s] myths of its antiquity.”

prior military acts from his predecessor, Elizabeth, James, a proponent for peace, rushes to create an official document showing a conquered Ireland under the reign of himself (a task that was originally started by Henry VIII).⁷

Much akin to James, Shakespeare's king also divides as he desires, which coincides with political and economic control and the actions of an absolutist British king. In *Lear*, the king believes he can divide his kingdom into three at a specific place on the map, a place where “shadowy forests with champains riched” meet with “plenteous rivers [and] wide-skirted meads” (1.1.62-3). This duty of division on paper becomes the job of the cartographer, it is the cartographer who “can choose [his] own starting point and can follow [his] own path[s] through a map's image to draw [his] own conclusion” (Edney 187). From the discourse of geography, Edney believes these different paths, or even the cartographer's depicted inaccuracies, are never actually the cartographer's fault – rather, no one ever thinks to blame the cartographer of any inaccuracies and liberties taken such as James's declaration as the king of Great Britain and Ireland. Shakespeare shows the division of a kingdom through the careful dividing and partitioning of Lear's lands.

⁷ In 1536, Henry VIII overthrew the current Irish government due to their unreliability as an ally.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The art of cartography in the early modern period originated from mariner's maps in the Middle Ages.⁸ Most medieval maps were not actual drawings but were written in shorthand and supplied compass distances between ports and landmarks with squared off land sections and several different vanishing points. During the Renaissance, interest developed in the history of mapmaking, and mapmakers found that the theory behind mapmaking stemmed from Aristotle and Greek scientific thought.⁹ In parallel with the history of mapmaking were “scientific and technological advances [which] began to promise better mapping techniques” (Bricker 9).¹⁰ Together with cosmographic insight from the Greeks, these mathematical and scientific calculations came together in what would be considered modern mapmaking practices of the time. These modern practices differed from maps of the Middle Ages because modern maps are much more detailed and pay close attention to particular boundary lines of a specific area rather than an all-encompassing universe, which was typical of maps during the Middle Ages. Maps in

⁸ Mariners in the Middle Ages were in control of navigating ships on open waters.

⁹ Aristotle believed that the heavens were made up of fifty-five spheres and man revolved around an unchanging and unmoving center sphere of earth.

¹⁰ See Charles Bricker *Landmarks of Mapmaking*.

the medieval period focused on medieval religious cosmology with man at its center under the gaze of God as suggested by fifth-century Roman cosmographer, Macrobius.¹¹

Upon initial inspection, maps are centrally viewed onto a single, two-dimensional piece of paper. However, Philip Armstrong believes that the central viewing position of a map “betrays the means employed in the construction of the map, and the political and commercial interests invested in it” (51).¹² In the gaze of James, the map becomes a model for a king's dominance and colonial practices. The map in *Lear* provides a political blueprint of Britain during the reign of James I and acts as a tool for unification. Cartography provides a way to show *Lear* as a text that speaks to a transitional period for Europe. When the kingdom is initially cut up into three pieces, Shakespeare highlights each piece of land in a specific way. The potential destruction of Britain becomes the downfall of a domineering king when the king has no connection with his own kingdom. This scene demonstrates how the division of a kingdom becomes the deterioration of the king.

¹¹ Medieval religious cosmology was suggestive of geometric angles and navigation; Macrobius also used “celestial spheres” that encircled “the earth in the form of a classical temple” (Gillies 77). Macrobius's view has a connection to Ptolemy. See John Gillies *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*.

¹² See Philip Armstrong “Spheres of Influence: Cartography and the Gaze in Shakespeare's Roman Plays.”

THE HISTORY OF MAPMAKING

Up until the time of Shakespeare in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most maps were not really maps at all, but rather sailing directions for mariners that were originally translated from French pilot Pierre Garcie. Garcie was from the port of St. Gilles sur Vie on the French Biscayan coast. Garcie's original book was translated in 1528 and titled *The Rutter of the Sea*. This book provided sailing directions of the eastern shores of England and the Soundings. *The Rutter of the Sea* “is notable for Robert Copland's prologue, for in it he explains not only why he published the book but what qualities and competencies the Master Mariner should possess” (Waters 241).¹³ Most of these map directions were in the form of either a kenning or in leagues unlike obscure mathematical equations.¹⁴ Many of these mariners lacked the education to create and solve complex mathematical equations to calculate distances.¹⁵ Charts were very rarely used, if ever, and instead these handwritten distances supplied the majority of mariners adequate sailing directions.

The stars became the viewing position of ancient mariners. This way of guiding their boats is an early form of cartography; however, sailing a boat from harbor to harbor this way was rife with inaccuracies. Mariners and seamen used mathematical calculations that were based on the position of the stars and, many times, had to continue to sail even if the directions were not always correct. Seamen

¹³ See David W. Waters *English Navigational Books, Charts and Globes Printed down to 1600*.

¹⁴ The *OED* defines kenning as: “the distance that bounds the range of ordinary vision, *esp.* at sea; hence, a marine measure of about 20 or 21 miles.”

¹⁵ The first published book on mathematics was published in Italy in 1478 (See Waters, pp. 242).

decided that if “It holds not full...the Error is inconsiderable” (Ratcliff 3). Accuracy and precision were seldom found in these early map forms. Mariner's maps chiefly provided geography data through the Middle Ages.

Maps from the Middle Ages were suggestive of cosmography, mathematics, and astrology, which were taken together to create a new, more realistic version of the Renaissance world. During this time, painters and architects also contributed to cartography, most especially architect Leon Battista Alberti's *costruzione legittima* due to its detailing of perspective and Leonardo da Vinci's use of red chalk in a drawing of Tuscany in 1502. Most medieval maps were designed in the T-O style, which was unhelpful in actually finding a specific location. The T-O map (sometimes known as a Beatine map from eighth-century Spanish monk, Beatus of Liébana) originates from seventh-century scholar Isidore of Seville and his *Etymologies*, which was a medieval encyclopedia that attempted to summarize everything known about man and the universe (Bricker 45). Maps of this time were not typically in the actual shape of modern day nations, but rather incorporated cosmographic elements into them, such as globes, spirits, and mythical animals. These maps were impractical and difficult to read due to the unrealistic portrayal of a kingdom. While one kingdom might appear enormous compared to a neighboring kingdom on paper, in reality, that kingdom might actually be smaller in land mass. In instances such as these, the cartographer was not looking for boundary accuracy, but instead a visual representation of the minds of men within that kingdom; men that appeared to be intelligent and educated, received a larger rendering in the drawing of the map, and a kingdom that the cartographer (or his patron) considered barbaric,

translated to unintelligent and uneducated, received a much smaller depiction on paper.

By as late as 1520, most of the English population had never viewed a map. In 1530, the Royal Library commissioned a newly transcribed English manuscript, but was still fashioned in the medieval style with religion as its core. When we say religion, what we are actually referring to is Ptolemy's classical style of cartographic imaginings with man at the center who is looked down from above by God. Classical and medieval maps were rooted in a long history of religious ideals and were “seen largely as a spiritual construct” (Smith 17). Thus, maps were not really maps at all, but instead were ignorant of geographic renderings. In 1559, William Cunningham's dissertation (*The Cosmographical Glasse*) on “the theory of the universe and practical knowledge of it” provided “educated Englishman a lively interest in cosmography and geography, set the fashion not only for men of culture to acquire and furnish their homes with globes and maps but also for those concerned with overseas commerce to encourage oceanic navigation” (Waters 242). Then, by 1579, England became a leader in geography by producing “the first national atlas in the west” and by producing several of the best maps in the world (Smith 41).¹⁶ During the late sixteenth century, the culmination of both cosmography and geography came together to join mathematical equations to form what we would consider modern mapmaking techniques. England became a beacon for the evolution of mapmaking through technological advances and the addition of mathematicians. Through this, the cartographer was born. The cartographer enacted precision and was not ignorant

¹⁶ See D.K. Smith *The Cartographic Imagination in Early Modern England*.

to the actual physical landscape. He was also keenly aware of the political ramifications of these advanced mapmaking skills. Due to this new mapmaking revolution, “an array of new beliefs and expectations about the precision and objectivity with which the physical world could be imagined” (Smith 42).

Cartographers became interested in the physical world but also the abstract space surrounding the physical features of the land, such as religion and politics. While medieval maps were heavily rooted in religious thought, early modern maps went a step further with calculated objectivity yet also still considered religion and the addition of politics to construct meaningful and useful maps.

Henry VIII, in the 1530s, fearful of a French invasion, wanted to fortify coastal towns and walls on the eastern shore. Military and engineers of the crown wanted to add more defenses and renovate “existing ones” through “a new value in cartographic precision” (Smith 45). Through these changes, current walls and fortresses needed to have added canons and other military defenses. Henry's engineers needed drawings or maps with absolute calculations; this became the job of the cartographer. The cartographer was the only one who could provide the most accurate maps for the engineers to add additional reinforcements to these old stone walls. Up until this point in history, “maps of towns or defenses had been largely pictorial and impressionistic, evoking a rough sense of the landscape but eliding any need for precision or accuracy” (Smith 45). The cartographer proved very worthy in situations such as this due to the collaboration of mathematics, cosmography, and geography. From this point, maps would no longer only be pictorial renderings, but

instead would become scientific documents that kings would consult in matters of importance.

After Henry VIII, his daughter Elizabeth would employ a number of surveyors and mapmakers “to establish the parameters of truth and virtue within which their knowledge and work would be understood” (Smith 49). However, mapmakers during Elizabethan England found themselves in several uncomfortable and suspicious situations. Noteworthy surveyors of the time include: Leonard Digges, Edward Worsop, and Radolph Agas.¹⁷ The accuracy in surveying became a skill that mapmakers deemed their reputation upon. If a mapmaker measured with extreme accuracy, he was thought very highly of. If accuracy was not a strongpoint for another mapmaker, then he usually found trouble. The importance of accuracy is shown in a pamphlet of Worsop's where the title states: *A discoverie of sundrie errours and faults daily committed by lande-meaters, ignorant of arithmetike and geometrie, to the damage, and prejudice of many her Maiesties subiects with manifest prooffe that none out to be admitted to that function, but the learned practisioners of those sciences...*” (Smith 49-50). It is unclear which specific manuals or pamphlets completely subvert faith in mapmaking during Elizabethan England. It should be noted, however, that Worsop's purpose in putting this information into his pamphlet is not to suggest his own inability at accurate mapmaking, but rather to draw attention to others who claim to be in his field, yet have not acquired the education and skill for accurate mapmaking. People would pose as surveyors and

¹⁷ Leonard Digges' *Booke Named Tectonicon* in 1556 and *Pantometrica* in 1571, Worsop's *A Discoverie of Sundry Errours and Faults Daily Committed by Landemeaters* in 1582, and Radolph Agas' *A Preparative to Plotting of Landes and Tenements of Surueigh* in 1596. See Smith, pp. 49.

mapmakers for coin but would lack any real training, which translates to any real precision and would make many mistakes. Mistakes such as these are what angered Elizabethan England. Property or boundary lines would be obscured due to imprecise measurements. Anxiety stemmed from not necessarily the owners of the land, but instead the workers of the land. Rather, it is “the inherent power of ownership, that threatens the customary rights of the tenant farmer” (Smith 51). It is actually the precision of the surveyor that threatens the land worker because now there are clear-cut boundary lines as to the ownership of each parcel of land.

At the end of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of James's reign, there was a change in how the world viewed England because “new cartographic renderings actually shifted England's position toward the center of the map in an effort to reflect its new importance and power” (Smith 126). The map became important due to its precision, but also its vividness in detail. During the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign and the first twenty years of James's reign, both colonialism and geography united to give “an ideology of imperialism in early modern England” (Smith 126). The result of this unity is how England shaped the world and became the center of modern cartography practices. Through the precision of the map, Shakespeare has used the metaphor of the map to suggest underlying political aspirations of a king.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS: LEAR AND THE MAP

The map in *Lear* represents all tangible lands on paper. Ultimately, the job of the sixteenth century cartographer was to make a visual representation of the king's political territory, without regard to actual physical boundaries. Yet, merely because a map is a rendering of a specific piece of land does not mean it is a tracing or an exact physical replica of that piece of land. This land is always moving and changing politically, meaning that the king conquers other lands or makes suggestions of where he believes his lands end; therefore, the map must move and change with the king's territory. The cartographer must constantly redraw the land in order to appease the king. The drawing from the cartographer represents the king's body of land or body of ownership; in the king's mind, he owns what is depicted on paper. This land represents the body politic for the king and his subjects because it shows the entire nation that the king controls. Lear cannot physically control his body politic, because his body politic is larger than the housing of his natural body. Yet, he does not appear to realize this. Instead, Lear is looking for unification in his kingdom through division, which may not necessarily be logical, but the words on the page suggest that Lear believes this to be his duty as an aging king: "Know that we have divided /

In three our kingdom / and 'tis our fast intent / To shake all cares and business from our age” (1.1.35-7). The correlation between king and kingdom is a critical aspect, because it shows how the king is presented on the page and on the map. The territory on the map shows the territory of the king over his kingdom, thus showing the rule or the kingship¹⁸ of the kingdom. It becomes the responsibility of the king to oversee and care for his subjects; this paper map represents his subjects. The map becomes everything the king controls.

The study of mapmaking begins with the actual person making the map, in other words, a human. Humans tend to err and can be persuaded by those they are employed through. Edney considers that “maps are instruments of the state's surveillance and control over its territories” (189)¹⁹; this control is what Lear is attempting to exert when he decides to divide his kingdom. Lear believes that by controlling the division of his land, he can thus retire yet still have familial control through his daughters “To shake all cares and business from our age” (1.1.37). *Lear* focuses on the effects made from decisions early in the play by giving out the land inheritance prior to his death. The king presumes he will still have control over his lands after death by having smaller parcels of his broken up kingdom managed by those he appoints (his daughters).

Land and maps became quite interesting in scholarship due to the idea of the “evident dissimilarity of the map to the written text” (Edney 187). Edney views text

¹⁸ The *OED* defines kingship as: “The office and dignity of a king; the fact of being king; reign.”

¹⁹ This idea originated from Foucault and how the state exerts power and knowledge over its people. See Edney, pp. 189.

as one-sided, strictly words on a page without any ambiguity. However, the map “is viewed as a highly liberating form of representation: users can choose their own starting point and can follow their own paths through a map's image to draw their own conclusions” (Edney 187).²⁰ This argument is highly problematic and divergent from much literary scholarship. Literary scholarship assumes that words on a page provide textual evidence to support multiple arguments. In looking at the map, which could also be considered two-dimensional or a flat surface, Edney argues that it is exactly the opposite; it is the map that has multiple facets or multiple personalities. A map is not simply a map. It is a two-dimensional representation of not only the physical land, but also the opinions and instructions from the cartographer's employer, who was often a member of the monarchy.

Viewing maps appealed to audience members in Shakespeare's England. When Lear references the map in Act I, he relies “heavily on the map to carry out his darker purpose, to make his complicated motivations appear to be larger than life, greater than the transient desires of his family” (Avery 49).²¹ Lear's motivations behind his untimely decision in dividing his kingdom appear to be rooted in continuing his body politic through his lineage.²² Lear uses this scene with the map “to provide a focal point centered on the discourse of patrimony, a magical place where obedience and gratitude result in 'gifts' of land during that familiar ritual, the

²⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, using psychoanalysis with concern to capitalism, believe maps “possess 'multiple entryways' and are therefore radically democratic.” See Edney, pp. 187.

²¹ Avery believes that Lear's purpose in the suggestion of the map has a direct connection with territory. See Avery, pp. 49.

²² By dividing up his body politic, three separate pieces will exist and become housed in three separate entities (his daughters).

passing of the torch” (Avery 49). If we accept that the map is not the territory, then what ultimately is the territory? How does *Lear* represent the ownership of land in sixteenth century England? The map is visually shown in the play, it is not the king's territory, but instead becomes the version of drama that the audience views. The play is a blueprint of all that is, was, and could be in not only Shakespearean England, but in voyages that are only daydreams to theater goers or stories that people might have heard. The play becomes an atlas to mark both chartered and unchartered territory. However, what should not be confused is theater; again the play is a map, but theater is not a map. To clarify, Avery believes that “theater does organize space; it does not represent space graphically as a fixed, homogenous entity viewed from a single, authoritative perspective” (60). What theater does do is focus on characters and spaces while maps “show space not as something actively constructed but as an object passively perceived” (Avery 60).²³ The king's space and what he owns is his decision, and the audience or the king's subjects must passively allow the king to do as he wishes. The audience would be familiar with certain aspects of territory, but might not recognize a connection between the mapmakers' artistry and Shakespeare's artistry or his suggestive metaphors of the king. Avery's view differs from other critics who believe that “the atlas ('this is our Theater') performs a theatrical function” (Gillies 72).²⁴ An atlas is a constructed map. The map shows people and lands from the farmer, the merchant, and well into “the 'Princes gallery or spacious

²³ Through Shakespeare's rhetoric and focus on the characters and mapping of these characters, Avery suggests that Shakespeare's theater stages “characters in the act of constructing space and establishing perspectives on it.” See Avery, pp. 60.

²⁴ Gillies argues that theater functions as a display board for maps. It is the audience that views these various “maps,” which are the plays. See Gillies, pp. 73.

Theater” (Gillies 72). The entire world, or the area the map is depicting, has been drawn in miniature and put onto a piece of paper; the paper becomes the world. Both Avery and Gillies view the map as static, but can be changeable upon a fixed stage.

There is a direct correlation between mapmaking and theatrical versions of territory. The reason for this correlation is to understand the world; how it works, but more importantly, who runs it. During the late sixteenth century, a county surveyor who was under the troubled patronage of Elizabeth had a dispute with a farmer. Farmers and other workers were less than forthcoming with mapmakers, because as the farmer relays to the cartographer: “customs are altered, broken, and sometimes perverted or taken away by your means” (Avery 48). Negativity and skepticism toward mapmaking became prevalent for mapmakers; worker's reluctance stemmed from “a convenient focus for anger rising out of transformations occurring in English culture” (Avery 48). In order to abate some of the anger, mapmakers decided to create their cartographic representations based on social and religious traditions, thus not changing anything at all. They merely reported what they saw, but in an acceptable and unchanging manner. Changes to a map were enigmatic because there was a great deal of difficulty in deciphering what was correct in terms of physical land features and what was changed based on suggestions from the king or queen to the cartographer. County maps were eventually found to contain fairly accurate information, yet there were several discrepancies in boundary lines, which means that the surveyor's “farmer, then, was right after all. Cartographers were not simply mirroring the world, they were transforming understanding of just what the world is” (Avery 48). This supports Edney's theory about the three-dimensionality of maps and

how maps are multi-faceted. Edney's theory is rooted in the historical evidence on how maps are not just physical renderings of the land, they are much more than that. Maps are also the ideals of a king or queen. This idea is evident in *1 Henry IV* when Hotspur is annoyed with how “this river comes me cranking in, / And cuts me from the best of all my land” (3.1.95-6). Hotspur uses his power over the territory to “have the current in this place dammed up, / And here the smug and silver Trent shall run / In a new channel fair and evenly” (3.1.98-100). This was not uncommon for a member of the monarchy to suggest, and Hotspur is assuming that his right over the territory also allows him the right over the land, which will be depicted on the map by the cartographer. The key evidence that Avery indicates in relation to territory and the body politic is how “mapmakers and those employing them made a concerted effort to create maps that represented themselves as something other than they really were, a radical change in the orientation of subjects toward their world” (48). Due to this unique map rendering, audience members found excitement in mapmaking and the stories that each map told.

Stories and rumors of usurpation were many times a threat to the monarchy, and the theme of usurpation is shown inside many of Shakespeare's works. In *Hamlet*, Player Lucianus, in his parody of King Claudius, gives a foreboding comedic performance of King Claudius' actions and acknowledges his brother's “natural magic and dire property / On wholesome life usurp immediately” (Ham. 3.2.237-8). While the word “usurp” can be implemented in many instances, it

nevertheless seems to always be used pejoratively.²⁵ Whether Goneril's bed is usurped in *Lear*, King Hamlet's throne and wife are usurped in *Hamlet*, or the possibility of Lear's lands being usurped, they all equal something that is divergent from the sought after. In deciding on the ownership of his lands, Lear neglects to see that he is doing exactly what he fears: he is usurping his own lands for the sake of boundary lines on a map. Whatever is on the physical landscape is present and there to stay with the exception of war destruction (not usurpation) or natural disaster. In telling the cartographer or his followers to carve up his lands and divide them amongst his three daughters, he is usurping his own kingdom by creating boundary lines that were not formerly present. In ninth century cartography, boundary lines were used to suggest areas which were cut off or lost (Dekker 15).²⁶ In Lear's aspirations toward unification, he is not only dividing his kingdom, but rather he is cutting off each third of his kingdom to be lost from each other; they will be three small, separate kingdoms. In his desire to decide who inherits his lands, Lear creates his own boundary lines suggesting that the cutting up of his territory is inconsequential to him due to his ambition for power once he dies. Lear has decided that he is the owner of the natural land, and he will do what he desires with it.

Other people who influenced the birth of mapmaking in England include: John Norden, a surveyor, historian, and cartographer who had quite a bit of trouble from the queen; Christopher Saxton, who wanted the patronage of Elizabeth for his

²⁵ The etymology of “usurp” was first used in the twelfth century. While the word is both a noun and a verb, every definition is used negatively with the exception of “feelings, passions, etc.”. However, with this definition of the word, the examples from the *OED* are compounded negatively in terms of feelings and passion.

²⁶ See Elly Dekker *Illustrating the Phaenomena: Celestial cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*.

English county maps; and, as mentioned prior, John Speed, one of England's most prominent cartographers under the patronage of James.

Cartographers map certain areas of the earth, a round earth. We should recognize this spherical shape of the earth because Shakespeare's plays were staged in a venue with the literal title of the *Globe*. *The Globe's* motto was *totus mundus agit histrionem* 'because all the world's a stage,' which is identified as “the roundness of the auditorium” (Gillies 77).²⁷ If we look at Shakespeare's *Globe Theatre*, we can see that the building of the theatre is part of this natural world; it is a structure in the physical world and is used by people for a purpose. Gillies believes the *Globe* is actually the map and

Renaissance maps are considered less as individual scientific documents than as a collective and evolving cultural text characterized as much by their pictorial (and often ancient ethnographic) symbolism as by their geographic content. (44)

However, a division between cartography and geography exists. During the Elizabethan era, the aristocracy would know that “the geography of Saxton's English maps was inseparable from the question of their own claims over the property it represented” (Gillies 46). In “Theatres of the World,” Thomas Haywood suggests that Elizabethans would have viewed the *Globe* in puns and metaphors that were suggestive of the actual *Globe* burning, which it did in 1613. This would signify a burning of the world.

²⁷ Gillies' argument on the roundness of theater actually comes from Macrobius and the celestial spheres rather than the roundness of the earth.

The rather capricious Elizabethan interpretation connects with a different interpretation which playwright, Thomas Haywood, defines as: “The world's a Theater, the earth's a Stage, / Which God, and nature doth with actors fill” (qtd. in Gillies 77). Haywood's concept of the world being a stage is transposed back and forth to suggest that the world is filled with people, and the theater is also filled with people. This suggests there is an inherent belief in theater being a natural part of this world. If the *Globe Theater* is part of this natural world, something that is peopled for a purpose, then the question lies in the purpose of the map in relation to the theater. Recent Shakespearean criticism has focused on the question of cartography within Shakespeare's writing, and Gillies believes the questions are comprised of two parts, which are either cartography or geography.²⁸ While *Lear* references the map, there is no specific stage direction that suggests a map was brought out and looked at. However, in the map scene, *Lear*'s phrasing of “plenteous rivers [and] wide-skirted meads” (1.1.62-3) shows that the “imagery is entirely consistent with the rich pictorial ornamentation of Saxton's maps of England and English counties” (Gillies 46). Saxton's maps illustrated features such as forests, hills, rivers, and towns. English Renaissance audiences would have recognized *Lear*'s suggestions of the map and the pictorial references. They would have also recognized the word “atlas” as something familiar from Saxton and as the official document in terms of land ownership and territory.

Gillies wonders whether or not Shakespeare was familiar with all of this cartographic knowledge, however Gillies is also suggesting that theater patrons

²⁸ While geography is the physical land, cartography is the study of that physical land.

would have been familiar with James's ownership and land-holding over Britain, the word and meaning of “atlas,” and stories of travel and voyages. If English audiences were familiar with these tropes, then Shakespeare would have at least some knowledge of this as well. I am not suggesting what Shakespeare knew and did not know, I am merely suggesting that he at least had prior knowledge of land and territorial rights, mapmaking, and travel beyond England.

As previously discussed, English audiences were familiar with the term “atlas,” due to Saxton's maps (first published in 1579) and also due to the Waghenaeer atlas. Lucas Janszoon Waghenaeer first published his atlas, *The Mariner's Mirrour* (1588) in Dutch, which consisted of forty-five cards or shorthand sea charts of navigational points in Europe that mariners found useful. These useful navigations included: “lunar, declination, and tide tables, and methods of determining latitude by stellar observations” (Crone 455).²⁹ Many of Waghenaeer's maps contained several inaccuracies of specific coastlines. Furthering Waghenaeer's work, Anthony Ashley, clerk of the queen's privy council, undertook the task of translating *The Mariner's Mirrour* alongside information specifically useful for English navigators, such as routes entering and exiting England's shores. Ashley's version is similar to Waghenaeer's on the inaccuracies of specific coastlines, yet both provide solid navigational practices such as the location of coastal channels and pragmatic navigational marks. Saxton's maps were specific to county mappings and Waghenaeer's (referred to as a Waghenaeer) were specific to the world as a whole; they encompassed shores beyond England and suggested wonderment of voyages traveled

²⁹ See G. R. Crone “The Mariner's Mirrour' 1588.”

afar in the illustrations. Nevertheless, in examining a Waghenauer, “the English Channel coast shows that in effect they are made up of fairly detailed charts of the principal harbours, and that the intervening coast line is represented very summarily” (Crone 457). What is also inconsistent with the Waghenauer is the included text that gives inaccurate directions for approaching the coast (Crone 457).³⁰ Due to this, Waghenauer's finished result is not specifically correct.

JAMES, SHAKESPEARE, AND IRELAND

As a proponent for peace, James publicly advocated for peaceful resolution as the king of Britain. In his coronation speech in 1603, he spoke about his many blessings, especially:

outward peace, That is, peace abroad with all foreign neighbours: for I thank God I may justly say, that never since I was a King I either received wrong of any other Christian Prince or State, or did wrong to any. I have ever, I praise God, yet kept peace and amity with all ... for by peace abroad with their neighbours the towns flourish, the merchants become rich, the trade does increase, and the people of all sorts of the land enjoy free liberty to exercise themselves in their general vocations without peril or disturbance ... In the word of a King I promise unto you, That I shall never give the first occasion of the breach thereof, neither shall I ever be moved for any particular or

³⁰ Waghenauer attests to the purpose of these charts for three reasons: “to help the pilot to recognize his landfall from the 'severall arisings and appearing of every country'; to give the compass direction of the desired haven, and the banks, rocks, etc., to be avoided; and to show the shore marks to be brought into line in entering.” (See Crone, pp. 457).

private passion of mind to interrupt your public peace, except I be forced thereunto, either for reparation of the honour of the Kingdom, or else by necessity for the weal and preservation of the same, in which case, a secure and honourable war must be preferred to an unsecure and dishonourable Peace. (James I 270)

In “Shakespeare's 'Histories': Mirrors of Elizabethan Policy”, Lily B. Campbell cites a letter James wrote to his son in 1599, discussing the topics of war and power. James writes: “and therefore warres upon just quarrels are lawful: but above all, let not the wrong cause be on your side” (267). It appears that in James's eyes, war is inevitable if the king desires it. This letter to his son was written four years prior to his coronation of England and during his reign of Scotland. James practices the binary of war and peace yet justifies the means of war as long as the fight is lawful in the eyes of the king.

However, James's view of what lawfully belongs to the British crown differs significantly from what the Irish believe is lawfully theirs. Prior to his coronation in England, James ruled a war-free Scotland with the exception of one minor border skirmish with England when James was only a child (Ridpath 650-2). James sought peace between England and prior nations of conflict, such as France and Spain. One year after his coronation (1604), James signed the Treaty of London, which made peace with Spain, a long-time rival. Nevertheless, James's main problems were actually at home with his parliament and the concerns with public opinion. Many of his problems were handed down from Elizabeth, yet there were still problems that needed solutions. Because James desired continued peace, his tactics lied in

negotiation rather than war. James's religious political position was questioned often between Catholic Rome and Protestant England. In the course of James's rule, he was constantly challenged “to support Protestant causes and to keep a firm stand with regard to the Catholic powers of Europe” (Kullmann 45).³¹ Given James's expanded political rule, he was put under pressure to not only rule the country of England, but instead to rule the kingdom of Britain. Amid James's early authority over Britain, he had to contend with the prior political ambitions from Elizabeth, such as these Protestant causes, Spanish opposition, and parliament.

During the reign of James, political tensions were initially high in both England and Ireland. For England, both politics and literature paralleled each other where “theoretically sophisticated discussions of colonial stereotypes in Shakespeare and his contemporaries have tended to concentrate on the Irish dimension of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English colonial expansion” (Maley 29).³² Additionally, Maley argues that these discussions furthered themselves with issues of colonialism and nationalism for England. We know that Shakespeare's source material for *King Lear* originated from Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Ireland, and Scotland* published in 1577.³³ Holinshed's *Chronicles* were actually written in two parts, and it is believed that Shakespeare used Holinshed's second part (1587), *King Leir*, as source material for *King Lear*. Another prominent figure in the writing of *King Lear* is Richard Stanyhurst, a man who provided location details, mapping, and compass skills for Holinshed. Stanyhurst “is a complex and controversial figure,

³¹ See Thomas Kullmann “Shakespeare and Peace.”

³² See Willy Maley “Shakespeare, Holinshed and Ireland: Resources and Con-texts.”

³³ Stephen Booth argues that “we care about *Holinshed's Chronicles* because Shakespeare read them” (qtd. in Maley 28).

a descendent of the original twelfth-century English settlement in Ireland – the Old English – who, having first supported the Elizabethan reconquest – by the New English – finally fled to the continent as a recusant” (Maley 28). Renaissance English audiences often found themselves in a unique interpretation of the problem with Ireland and were either on the side of colonialism or nationalism.³⁴

Many Shakespearean critics, such as Andrew Hadfield in “‘Hitherto she ne’re could fancy him’: Shakespeare’s ‘British’ Plays and the Exclusion of Ireland,” focus on Shakespeare’s exclusion of Ireland in his plays, yet what these critics imply is not really exclusion, but instead more of a glossing over of Ireland or a hint of the Irish troubles in many of his plays. Hadfield argues that “Shakespeare was clearly aware of Ireland and referred to the kingdom and its inhabitants regularly – albeit usually briefly – in many of his earlier works” (47). Popular play choices among critics, such as Hadfield, Andrew Murphy, and Clifford Stetner, are *Henry V*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard II*. *Henry V* supports “the English colonization of Ireland” while “the English are mirrored triumphant in a righteous cause, achieving victory through the blessing of God (Stetner 17, 19). Greenblatt further extends this argument by suggesting that “the whole State seems – to adapt More’s phrase – a conspiracy of the great to enrich and protect their interests under the name of commonwealth, even here the audience does not leave the theatre in a rebellious mood” (qtd. in Stetner 30).³⁵ In the tragic *Macbeth*, it is Donalbain that escapes to Ireland fleeing death and tragedy at the hands of Macbeth. *Richard II* is steeped in the current political

³⁴ Maley argues that oftentimes, those that inhabited Ireland, found themselves as either a native of Ireland or as a colonizer. See pp. 29.

³⁵ See Clifford Stetner “Colonizing Ireland in the Hybrid Performance / Text of Shakespeare’s *Henry V*.”

problems with the Irish. Hadfield argues that “before his suicidal rebellion, Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, paid the Lord Chamberlain's company to perform Shakespeare's *Richard II* as a spur to his followers” (49). On February 7, 1601, the performance provoked the Privy Council further due to the similarity between Essex and Bolingbroke (Hadfield 49). Essex, formerly a favorite with Elizabeth and a general during the Nine Years War, failed to follow orders in defeating O'Neill in Ulster. Eventually, Essex led a coup in an attempt to overthrow the Elizabethan government. He was executed for treason in 1601.

Likely, Shakespeare's glossing over of the conflict in Ireland in his later plays was due to restrictions imposed on the stage after June 1599. These restrictions

clearly impinged upon Anglo-Irish relations; a desire not to be connected too closely to the Earl of Essex and his Irish adventures; and, perhaps most importantly, an understanding that any sustained reference to Ireland in a play was likely to solicit unfavourable attention from the authorities.

(Hadfield 52)

Many of Shakespeare's plays, written at the end of Elizabeth's reign and the beginning of James's reign, respond to both international politics and civil war, such as *Julius Caesar*, *Henry V*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*.³⁶ In 1603, “James distinguished Shakespeare's theatrical company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, by allowing them to call themselves the King's Men” (Kullmann 46).³⁷ With this distinguished title, the King's Men were expected to “contribute to his royal splendour,” which they did by

³⁶ *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V* (1599), *King Lear* (1605), and *Macbeth* (1606).

³⁷ See Thomas Kullmann “Shakespeare and Peace.”

performing over 175 times at court for James. Shakespeare's theater company performed more than any other theater troupe at court.

During James's reign, Shakespeare's plays were expected to support James's political agenda. One of these requirements was for the King's Men to “support the king in influencing public discourse, and that one of their tasks was to propagate James's concept of universal peace” (Kullmann 46). Prior to allowing Shakespeare's men to call themselves the King's Men, James did his research.³⁸ He felt that in all of Shakespeare's earlier plays, a sense of peace was to be felt by the end, most particularly in the histories when a semblance of reconciliation was made between the protagonists. In “Shakespeare and Peace,” Thomas Kullmann argues that “Shakespeare was indeed subversive, in that he tried to assist King James in subverting public opinion” (48). It was both public opinion and his Parliament that worried James.

Hadfield believes that *King Lear* is a play about the division of Britain. Nevertheless, in the opening lines, when Lear asks for the map, he is attempting to divide his lands into three parts for his three daughters while, at the same time, marrying them off to other leaders or countries. His attempt at unifying his family involves dividing up his current lands. Goneril will marry the Duke of Albany, which on a map, is Scotland. We should view Scotland as representing James – the best suitor. Regan will marry the Duke of Cornwall, which is Wales and Western England on a map. The last portion of Lear's lands is “a cut-down, ragged, violated English

³⁸ Kullmann writes that “in Shakespeare's earlier plays James could find ample evidence of the dramatist's peaceful attitude. Almost all of the plays end with some kind of reconciliation” (46).

remainder” for Cordelia (Hadfield 53). In Shakespeare's version of *King Lear*, Lear's last daughter Cordelia is to be married to either the Duke of Burgundy or the King of France. However, in Holinshed's version of *King Leir*, Cordelia is to be married to the King of Ireland. Holinshed's Leir's intention of marrying off his daughters is “to secure a male heir now that his Queen is dead, and to secure his kingdom by uniting them with 'neighbour Kings,/Bordring within the bounds of Albion'” (Hadfield 53). In Holinshed's version, Cordelia's husband is first said to be the King of Brittany, but later in the text, it is revealed that he is the King of Ireland. In Shakespeare's version, it is never explicitly stated why Cordelia does not want to marry according to her father's wishes. However, in Holinshed's, it is. Cordelia actually loathes “the Irish King” and is hesitant to follow her father's instructions (Hadfield 53). In both versions, Cordelia refuses the wishes of her father.

In Lear's division, “the kingdom of Britain could be seen as that political fall of man which James, through a union of Scotland and England, was going to rectify” (Kullmann 48). Through this separation, both of Lear's eldest daughters find themselves in lands too far removed from court (albeit Scotland and Wales). Once Lear requests a meeting with both Goneril and Regan's husbands, they meet at court, which on a map, is London. Hadfield believes the remoteness of the eldest two daughters' lands is “the Celtic fringe from the English centre, and also the fear that England was being left in the hands of exotic savages – like the Irish? - who did not have its best interests at heart and who will dismember not protect the kingdom” (54). The Irish are suggested by Hadfield due to Lear's wishes that Cordelia, his favorite, marry the King of Ireland. *King Lear* focuses on the possibility of the

complete annihilation of the concept of Britain and a combined kingdom. Due to Elizabeth and James's attempt at colonizing Ireland, the entirety of Britain was at stake of being disbanded. Lear's delusions of a unified kingdom through dividing his own lands can also be placed upon Britain's own monarchy and the decisions of a land-hungry king and queen. Hadfield believes that Shakespeare's purposeful absence of Ireland in *King Lear*, which is within Holinshed's original version, is quite deliberate. In Shakespeare's version, there are a:

number of topical references: a play which represents the division of the kingdom at a time when James I was keen to unite Britain in the teeth of the opposition of the English House of Commons, and, which actually portrays the husbands of Goneril and Regan as bearing the same titles as the king's own sons. (Hadfield 55)

If Shakespeare had used Holinshed's King of Ireland as Cordelia's proposed suitor, it would have undoubtedly been politically dangerous for Shakespeare. By changing Holinshed's original version, Shakespeare focuses on the tense politics encompassing early modern theater.

VIEWING POSITION

The art of mapmaking is woven intertextually throughout *King Lear*. The geographical contours of the map, the representation of the land, and the strict lines within the map all depict the king's authority over his own land by showcasing on paper the edge of the king's territory and the boundary to what he rules. The line of sight for each character and their place on the map is critical due to its social

implications. For example, in the Dover Cliff scene, “the displacement of the central viewing position emerges by means of the reversed line of sight which Edgar directs upwards from the foot of the cliff” (Armstrong 51). This line of sight represents the king's boundary to his realm because it is as far as the eye can see. What is beyond that line of sight cannot be seen and remains either a mystery or is dependent upon the map, which shows the specific location of the boundary line. The viewing position depends upon each character's position.

For Gloucester, his position is the words from Edgar, yet he is unable to gain a sight-oriented position due to his eyes being knocked out. Instead, he is able to gain a viewing position that relies upon his other sensory organs - hearing and the feeling or climbing of his legs. While Gloucester and his son are not truly hiking up Dover Cliff, Edgar gives Gloucester his own unique viewing position through his other sensors (hearing and feeling); his cartographic view is heightened, because it is unique in comparison to everyone else in the play due to blindness. His view is not simply only comprised of sound and touch, but also suggests a new hope or new light for Gloucester, unbeknownst to him. Gloucester believes he is climbing to commit suicide, but due to his unique viewing position, he is unable to accomplish this task; his son, or Tom o'Bedlam recognizes this uniqueness and gives him renewed confidence through comfort and prayer that “the right may thrive” (5.2.2). The uniqueness of position is what Armstrong calls an “illusion of distance” and is dependent upon “a series of metonymic reductions, decreasing the proportions of the

visual plane step by step until it reaches [a] vanishing point” (52).³⁹ Gloucester's illusion is that of his eyesight where he can only imagine his surroundings, and the vanishing point becomes something central where everything eventually leans toward. He can imagine where he is and their location, and he can also imagine their ultimate target. Gloucester is reliant on his son for clues as to their location on the map; a map or location that he would be familiar with.

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's rhetorical device in *King Lear* of glossing over Ireland mirrors the political tensions of the early modern period and the danger of eluding to the problems between England and Ireland. In Act I, Scene I, Lear's strategy for unifying his kingdom amongst his three daughters shows Lear's inadequacy at continuing his family lineage. James's strategy for peacefully unifying Britain and Ireland is a rushed declaration as the “King of Great Britaine” in Speed's *Theatre*. By imposing this assertion upon his subjects, James “justified his imperial rule on the basis of the previous use of the term *Britain* in both maps and diplomatic correspondence” (Netzlöff 317). Speed's *Theatre* illustrates James's fortune in utilizing a map for his colonial ventures. These ventures parallel Shakespeare's theater by showing us that not only does the play become the map, but theatre becomes the outlet for the people. The map is constantly changing and being redrawn; wars are being fought and are either won or lost. The map must change with contemporary happenings. It is the theater, a theater of people, that watches, from their unique viewing position, the

³⁹ The mariner's vanishing point was unique to his sailing perspective. See Armstrong, pp. 52.

changes that a king must concede with. The audience watches the stage as battles between king and those surrounding him change. It is a minute epoch of time that the audience becomes witnesses to.

The map in *Lear* becomes a blueprint to Britain in the early modern period. It is a blueprint due to the similarity of the political happenings in *Lear* and the politics surrounding James I. Upon initial inspection, a map is just a piece of paper with drawings upon it. However, we realize that a map is much more than that; a map is not simply a drawing of the physical landscape. While a map shows various physical land features such as rivers and towns, it also shows what is contained inside or alongside those rivers and towns. A map shows who is inside the castle, which means who holds power over the land. It is the king that holds this power, and a map shows this information. The blueprint of the land is much more than a physical rendering of the castle, but instead who is inside that castle in power. The map in *Lear* is not just there for Lear to view his physical landscape, but instead it is there for Shakespeare to show how powerful monarchy can make decisions on boundary lines and on where the rule begins and ends. In James's situation, those boundary lines extend beyond the shores of England and Scotland and extend to the shores of Ireland. The king will take and extend as he desires, even if his tool is one of peace. Because a map contains both words and images, the realms of English cartography “drew much of their imaginative power not just from what they showed, but from what they suggested” (Smith 59). This kind of parallel information drew the viewer into the politics of cartography. In the map, both James and Lear are able to visualize what they want and then to see it conceptualized in the context of cartography.

Lear's evident betrayal to his favorite daughter (and possibly the other two, as well) showcases the king's mistrust in one person or daughter handling an entire kingdom. Rather, the king would prefer little, cut-up pieces of land under one title of the name Lear. James's new empire becomes a problem for Speed on how to handle lightly, yet pragmatically, James's war torn, yet pieced together kingdom. Speed's tactic in *Theatre* relies on using the Irish coat of arms alongside James's coat of arms on his maps, which “distinguishes between the past...reign of the Irish and James's newly constituted and recently consolidated dominion over his territories” (Netzloff 317).⁴⁰ In the end, it is Lear who finally realizes that his plans for a unified kingdom shall “come no more” (5.3.282). *King Lear* suggests the separation of a kingdom. Through cartographic accuracy, the early modern cartographer enacted both Lear and Britain's unification plan on paper by illustrating kingdom boundary lines apace with the concealed political agenda of a king.

⁴⁰ James and Speed's strategy with the coat of arms is reflective of the Roman conquest of Britain. See Netzloff, pp. 317.

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